Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1.-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A chemically synthesized double stranded ~~short interfering~~ nucleic acid ~~(siNA)~~ molecule, wherein:

a. the ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid comprises a first strand and a second strand;

b. the first strand comprises a sense region and the second strand comprises an antisense region;

c. each strand is ~~19~~ about 18 to ~~29~~ about 27 nucleotides in length, about 18 to about 23 nucleotides of each strand are complementary to each other, and at least 19 nucleotides of the second strand are complementary to a target RNA sequence; and

d. the first strand includes a terminal cap moiety at the 5'-end~~,~~ and the 3'-end~~, or both of the 5' and 3' ends~~ of said first strand, and the second strand includes a terminal cap moiety at the 3'-end of said second strand, wherein said 3'-end terminal cap moiety is independently selected from the group consisting of 4',5'-methylene nucleotide; 1-(beta-D-erythrofuranosyl) nucleotide, 4'-thio nucleotide; 1,5-anhydrohexitol nucleotide; L-nucleotides; *threo*-pentofuranosyl nucleotide; acyclic 3',4'-seco nucleotide; acyclic 3,4-dihydroxybutyl nucleotide; acyclic 3,5-dihydroxypentyl nucleotide, 3'-3'-inverted nucleotide moiety; 3'-3'-inverted abasic moiety; 3'-2'-inverted nucleotide moiety; 3'-2'-inverted abasic moiety; and said 5'-end cap moiety is selected from the group consisting of 4',5'-methylene nucleotide; 1-(beta-D-erythrofuranosyl) nucleotide; 4'-thio nucleotide, 1,5-anhydrohexitol nucleotide; L-nucleotide; LNA; *threo*-pentofuranosyl nucleotide; acyclic 3',4'-seco nucleotide; 3,4-dihydroxybutyl nucleotide; 3,5-dihydroxypentyl nucleotide, 5'-5'-inverted nucleotide moiety; and 5'-5'-inverted abasic moiety.

19. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said ~~siNA~~ molecule comprises no ribonucleotides.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said ~~siNA~~ molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein each strand comprises at least 19 nucleotides that are complementary to the nucleotides of the other strand.

29. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule is assembled from two separate oligonucleotide fragments wherein one fragment comprises the sense region and a second fragment comprises the antisense region of said ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule.

30. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said sense region is connected to the antisense region via a linker molecule.

31. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 30, wherein said linker molecule is a polynucleotide linker.

32. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 30, wherein said linker molecule is a non-nucleotide linker.

33. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein pyrimidine nucleotides in the sense region are 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotides.

34. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein purine nucleotides in the sense region are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

35. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense region are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

36. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein pyrimidine nucleotides of said antisense region are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides

37. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein purine nucleotides of said antisense region are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.

38. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the ~~siNA~~ double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18 in an acceptable carrier or diluent.